commissioned distributors/unviable distributors, etc., It is, therefore, not possible to indicate a definite time frame for release of connections to the waitlisted persons. However, with the expected higher availability of LPG through imports, more connections are planned to be released and it is expected to clear the entire waiting list by the year 2000-1, throughout the country.

The Oil Companies have taken steps to augment LPG production from indigenous sources and maximise LPG imports through existing facilities at Mumbai, Vizag, Kandla and Mangalore. Action has also been taken to augment LPG bottling capacity, LPG movement capacity procurement of LPG equipment etc., and expanding retail network for meeting the demand of existing and the new customers.

IOC's LPG Bottling plants in A.P.

2772. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian Oil Corporation's LPG bottling plants functioning in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether Indian Oil Corporation plan to open more such plants in the State; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to meet LPG demand in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) One LPG bottling plant of IOC at Vijaywada with a capacity of 22 TMTPA is currently operating in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

(b) Indian Oil Corporation proposes to set up two new bottling plants under the VIII Plan in the following locations in Andhra Pradesh:

Location	*Capacity (TMTPA)*
Cuddapah	44
Secunderabad/Hyderabad (Cherlapally)	26

(c) Efforts are constantly on to release LPG connections to applicants as early as possible. Plants have been drawn for higher availability of LPG by increasing the capacity of existing production sources, putting up new plants and higher imports through existing and new facilities.

Price Increase of Natural Gas

2773. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:
DR. MOHAN BABU:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the price of natural gas in the country, year-wise from 1990, till date, and whether the figures compare with those in Italy, Germany, France, Thailand, Korea and Japan; and

(b) the annual rate of increase in the prices of natural gas since 1990 and whether the figures compare with the price increase of LPG, HSD, Petrol, during the same period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) the consumer price of gas, yearwise since 1990 is shown in the Table below:

	Rs./MMC
1990	1400
1991	1400
1992	1550
1993	1650
1994	1750
1995	1850
1996	1850
1997	1850

The price of gas in the North-Eastern Stats has been Rs. 1000/MCM since 1990.

The current border price of gas in Europe is around Rs. 3900/MCM. The price of gas in Japan is higher.

(b) The rate of increase in the natural gas price over 1990—97 works out to around 4.6% per annum which is lower than the increase in the price of LPG, HSD & Petrol.

Committees for Prices of Natural Gas

2774. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:
SHRI S.M. KRISHNA:
SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the committees appointed during the last ten years on natural gas or fuel related pricing issues;

(b) the details of recommendations made by each of these committees and those accepted by Government; and

(c) what action has been taken to implement those recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) A committee was constituted in 1990 and another in 1995 to recommend charges in natural gas prices.

(b) and (c) The Kelkar Committee constituted in 1990 recommended a fixed producer price based on the long run average cost of production from the South Bassein field and a gradually increase in consumer price approaching the international price of high sulphur fuel oil. These recommendations were broadly accepted by the Government while fixing the natural gas price w.e.f. 1.1.1992. The Sankar Committee Constituted in 1995 has recommended a gradual increase in the consumer price of gas to approach the import parity price. These recommendations are under examination in the Government.

The Government had constituted Oil Prices Review Committee (OPRC) in 1989. It was felt that the report of the Committee prepared in a different context may not be fully relevant and therefore was not processed. A Strategic Planning Group on restructuring of Oil Industry ('R' Group) was constituted in 1994. The report of the Group is being examined by the Government.

दरभंगा में पेट्रोल पम्प के विरुद्ध शिकायत

2775. श्री रामगोपाल यादव: क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार को दिसम्बर, 1996 में दरभंगा (बिहार) के बेनीपुर में "सुन्दर सर्विस सेन्टर" नाम के पेट्रोल पम्प के विरुद्ध शिकायत प्राप्त हुई थी;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उक्त पेट्रोल पम्प के विरुद्ध की गई कार्यवाही का ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ग) यदि कोई कार्यवाही नहीं की गई है तो इसके क्या कारण हैं;

(घ) क्या जांच अधिकारी ने शिकायतकर्ता से संपर्क किया है, यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं; और

(ङ) क्या उक्त विक्रेता द्वारा दी जा रही रसीदों पर लाइसैंस नम्बर नहीं छपा हुआ है, यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण है?

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री टी॰ आर॰ बालू): (क) जी, हां। मैं सुन्दर सर्विस स्टेशन, बेनीपुर, दरभंगा (बिहार) के विरुद्ध एक शिकायत श्रीमती सुभावती देवी सांसद, लोक सभा के माध्यम से श्री राम लखन यादव से दिसम्बर, 1996 में प्राप्त हुई है।

(ख) जांच के दौरान यह पाया गया है कि डीलर ने निर्धारित दर की तुलना में एक पैसा अतिरिक्त लिया था। खुदरा बिक्री केन्द्र पर बिक्री और आपूर्ति विपणन अनुशासन दिशा-निर्देश के अंतर्गत 14.2.1997 से 15 दिनों के लिए निलंबित कर दी गई।

(ग) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।